

KARO-ECHO Membership Meeting Minutes – Nov 11 2019

Meeting initiated with introductions and welcoming new attendees.

October Minutes were approved

The training session was the main agenda item and was a detailed report by Don (NI6A) and Howdy (KE6BEE) on the KARECHO SET (Simulated Emergency Test) held on 26 October 2019. The SET was generally agreed to be a success. We had significant participation with over 20 hams participating at locations including the El Cerrito City Hall EOC and various CERT ICPs (some specific ICPs, others simulated across all of El Cerrito and Kensington). A number of hams from our Richmond membership came to EC and worked as radio operators at several of our locations.

The drill lasted three hours (0900 -1200). In summary, many elements of the drill worked very well. We had good participation from the KE hams at stations distributed across the communities. The EC EOC was opened for us to operate with the installed radio and antenna at City Hall. It was also opened on the preceding day for a training session orient many KE members to the equipment. Thank you to Chief Janes who made both of these EOC opportunities possible. Efforts are underway to work with Chief Janes to increase the number of KE members with CERT ID credentials to facilitate entry to the EOC (and ham operation).

On the actual day of the SET we had 4 ham operators working at the EOC. Natalie KM6UCF did a great job as EOC operator (for the first time) and handled 13 messages. Robin KN6CMP, Annette KJ6SWK, and Marion KC6OBK were scribes.

The exercise reveals a few areas for improvement and further training. When using tactical call signs, there could be better consistency with the use of FCC callsign every 10 minutes and when starting/stopping on any frequency. The different types of message precedence need more practice and consistent use. Further discussion and understanding of when to use formal written messages versus ad hoc verbal messages was discussed. Avoid repeating messages in their entirety. More practice needed with efficient use of fills and prowords associated with fills.

There was a brief discussion was given about participation by Richmond CERT and FRS/GMRS/ham radio operators in the upcoming Light Up the Bay (LUTB on 16 Nov) – the County-wide radio drill – which Richmond CERT has committed to participating in. The neighborhood GMRS network will be a key element in linking the Richmond neighborhoods to the City EOC which in turn will communicate for the City to the County EOC in Martinez. The CERT groups in ECK will try to participate on an individual basis, using a simulated EOC as our City net center – which is being used by other smaller cities in Contra Costa.

The club executive board also thanked Jamuel Starkey for his service

as our first Emergency Coordinator where he led the effort to locate the radio sets that EC had placed in some of the City clubhouses and had fallen into disrepair and disuse. As a result we recovered 5 radios, repaired some, and have begun building them into mobile go kits that can be deployed to CERT ICP locations for communication during a disaster. Jamuel has moved to Berkeley, and the Board has appointed Howdy Goudey as the new Emergency Coordinator. Howdy will retain his role as Net Manager now that he has created a rotation of 8 net control hams who lead the weekly nets.